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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 000995

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [IS](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: UNIFIL-LED CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS TRAINING A
WORK IN PROGRESS

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) training program aims to develop the Lebanese Armed Forces' (LAF) "soft power" in the form of better community relations and services. COL John Molloy, who heads the program, believes the optimal long-term goal of CIMIC training could be the eventual displacement of Hizballah by the LAF. Because the LAF does not currently prioritize CIMIC missions, Molloy believes that raising the profile of CIMIC within the organization is a critical step to bring focus, resources and top-notch personnel to these valuable operations. The USG might investigate ways to support CIMIC expansion in the LAF as a way to encourage the LAF to deploy in south Lebanon. End summary.

THE NEED FOR SOFT POWER

¶2. (C) UNIFIL CIMIC training is focused on encouraging LAF officers to project "soft power" by developing relationships with local officials and improving local conditions through community service projects, UNIFIL head of CIMIC training COL John Molloy told poloff on August 27. The optimal long-term goal of the training, Molloy believed, should be eventual displacement of Hizballah by the LAF as the primary authority in the border regions. Because the LAF has never before played a CIMIC role, Molloy described the first goal of the program as raising awareness of the potential benefits of community liaison.

CIMIC NEEDS STATUS WITHIN THE LAF

¶3. (C) Molloy decried the fact that recent graduates of the program are likely not assigned by the LAF to CIMIC duties, although UNIFIL has not actively tracked the post-training assignments of the first 12 officers. The LAF headquarters should establish a general officer-led J-9 CIMIC office, Molloy underscored, in order to provide a formal career path for CIMIC officers and soldiers by attracting top personnel and resources. UNIFIL's first class included several officers who were not active duty due to severe injuries incurred during the 2007 assault on the Nahr al-Barid refugee camp. These inactive officers were experienced officers valued by the LAF for whom CIMIC presents a good career option. Nevertheless, Molloy urged that the LAF invest in CIMIC by dedicating talented active duty officers to the program, as well. LAF Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations General Abdul Chehaytli has given the go-ahead for two more UNIFIL-led CIMIC classes, thus indicating that the LAF

leadership understands the positive aspects of the program. In time, Molloy mused, Lebanese CIMIC officers might also serve in U.N. missions abroad.

MONEY CAN'T BUY THE LAF PUBLIC TRUST

14. (C) Money alone is not sufficient to win the public's "hearts and minds," Molloy insisted. UNIFIL only has about \$500,000 for its own Quick Impact Projects (QUIPs), he noted, and expends \$20,000 or less per project. The GOL, working through the LAF, must transmit its concern for the public interest with more personal and frequent community relationship-building efforts. To that end, CIMIC training is also targeted at impressing upon LAF leadership that community efforts are an essential element in strengthening public support for a more robust LAF presence in border regions, Molloy reported. Because of the LAF's dire financial situation, Molloy asked us to circulate a list of basic office and radio communications equipment that donor countries could provide to supplement UNIFIL's contributions. He also requested that donors offer additional overseas training opportunities.

COMMENT

15. (C) The LAF currently lacks both a vision for CIMIC programs and the basic resources to support them. Nevertheless, the CIMIC program is gaining currency within UNIFIL as a complimentary tool to aid in fulfilling UN

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Security Council Resolution 1701, which calls for enhanced LAF presence and eventual control over UNIFIL's area of operation south of the Litani River. As such, the USG might investigate ways to support CIMIC expansion in the LAF as a realistic way to encourage the LAF to deploy in south Lebanon and develop the relationships that will make it more effective when UNIFIL scales back its forces in the future.

SISON